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Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-04 /076 W
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R 130540Z NOV 74
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1464
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 8391

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TH, LA
SUBJECT: THAI FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO LAOS

REF: BANGKOK 17862 (NOTAL)

1. THAI MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CHARUNPHAN ISARANGKHUN NA AYUTHAYA, MADE A SUCCESSFUL GOOD-WILL VISIT TO LAOS FROM NOVEMBER 6 THROUGH 8. NO DOUBT CHARUNPHAN'S PREVIOUS SERVICE AS AMBASSADOR TO VIENTIANE AND THE IMPRESSIVE CALIBER OF THE MEMBERS OF HIS DELEGATION ENHANCED HIS SUCCESS, BUT PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR THE LAO WAS THAT THE THAI, WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY GIVEN RELATIONS WITH LAOS A LOW PRIORITY, TOOK THE TROUBLE TO COME AT ALL.

2. DURING HIS VISIT, CHARUNPHAN PARTICIPATED IN SEVERAL WORKING SESSIONS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHERE THE LAO SIDE WAS PRESIDED OVER BY FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT. HE ALSO MET WITH PRINCE SOUVANNA PHOUMA AND PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG AND FLEW TO LUANG PRABANG TO CALL ON THE KING.
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3. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE, PUBLISHED AT THE CLOSE OF THE VISIT, STATED THAT THE THAI HAD EXPRESSED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PGNU IN THE STRICT APPLICATION OF THE VIENTIANE ACCORDS. THE THAIS ALSO PLEDGED TO COOPERATE, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, WITH THE PGNU IN THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AREAS. THE TWO SIDES REAFFIRMED THAT "RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY, INDEPENDENCE, UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY ACCORDING TO THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE CONSTITUTES A JUST AND INDISPENSABLE BASIS FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS." THAILAND PROPOSED AID TO LAOS TOTALING 15 MILLION BAHT (ABOUT $750 THOUSAND): A 5 MILLION BAHT FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION; 3 MILLION BAHT WORTH OF STICKY RICE; 5 MILLION BAHT WORTH OF WEARING APPAREL; AND 2 MILLION BAHT WORTH OF VARIOUS PRODUCTS. THEY BOTH AGREED TO RAISE THE JOINT LAO-THAI COMMISSION TO THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL.

4. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE THAI DELEGATION, SAY VONGSOUTHI, DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, SAID THAT THE LAO GOVERNMENT (WHICH WAS REPRESENTED BY PATHET LAO LEADER PHOUMI) TOLD THE THAIS THAT IT WAS TROUBLED BY THE AMERICANS STATIONED AT BASES IN THAILAND AND FEARED THAT THEY MIGHT COMMIT "AGGRESSIONS" AGAINST LAOS, AND THAT LAOS WANTED THEM REMOVED. CHARUNPHAN IS QUOTED AS REPLYING THAT THAILAND HAD NO INTENTION OF CAUSING TROUBLE FOR LAOS. TO THE CONTRARY, THE THAI GOVERNMENT APPROVED THE REUNIFICATION OF THE LAO PEOPLE AND SUPPORTED THE LAO POLICY OF RE-ESTABLISHING NATIONAL CONCORD. SAY CONTINUED THAT LAOS HAD OUTLINED ITS DIFFICULTIES TO THE THAI REPRESENTATIVES AND HAD ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION IN THE AREAS OF TRANSIT OF MERCHANDISE, THE HIGH COST OF TRANSPORTING GOODS IN TRANSIT, AND LAO-THAI FRONTIER PROBLEMS.

5. FINANCE MINISTER NGON SANANIKONE AND INTERIOR MINISTER PHENG PHONGSAVAN, IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE, DESCRIBED THE VISIT IN VERY POSITIVE TERMS. BOTH SAID THAT CHARUNPHAN HANDLED HIMSELF VERY WELL. NGON ADDED THAT THE LAO HOPED FOR CERTAIN CHANGES IN THE AID PACKAGE AND WOULD LIKE TO SUBSTITUTE CEMENT AND SUGAR FOR CONFIDENTIAL

THE CLOTHES AND RICE THE THAI HAD OFFERED. HE ALSO SAID THAT PHOUMI HAD ASKED ABOUT THAI TROOPS IN LAOS AND CHARUNPHAN HAD ASSURED HIM THAT THEY HAD ALL BEEN WITHDRAWN. CHARUNPHAN REPOSTED BY ASKING ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE IN LAOS AND PHOUMI REPLIED THAT "OTHER FOREIGN TROOPS" WOULD BE WITHDRAWN SOON. NGON EXPLAINED THAT PHOUMI HAD RAISED THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN BASES IN THAILAND WITHOUT OBTAINING THE CONSENT TO DO SO

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FROM HIS VIENTIANE SIDE COLLEAGUES WHO WERE IRRITATED BY
HIS UNILATERAL ACTION.

6. SAVIS GARIVAT, COUNSELOR OF THE THAI EMBASSY, CHARACTERI-
ZED THE VISIT TO AN EMBOFF AS BEING STRICTLY A COURTESY
CALL AND SAID THAT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS AT ISSUE IN THAI-
LAO RELATIONS WOULD BE DEALT WITH BY THE LAO-THAI JOINT
COMMISSION. HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY TRANSIT OF LAO IM-
PORTS AND EXPORTS ACROSS THAILAND AND TRADE BETWEEN THE
TWO COUNTRIES. IN REPLY TO THE EMBOFF'S QUERY, SAVIS STATED
THAT CHARUNPHAN HAD NOT RAISED THE QUESTION OF THAI SOLDIERS
MISSING IN ACTION IN LAOS DURING HIS STAY. HE HAD NO
COMMENT ON SAY'S STATEMENT THAT THE LAO HAD RAISED THE
QUESTION OF THE REMOVAL OF AMERICAN BASIS IN THAILAND.
ALL IN ALL, HE THOUGHT THAT THE VISIT HAD BEEN A SUCCESS.

7. THE VISIT GAVE OCCASION FOR A SMALL STUDENT DEMONSTRATION
AGAINST THE THAIS, LED BY ACTIVISTS OF THE LAO STUDENT

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PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 8391

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FEDERATION FROM THE LAW SCHOOL AND BACKED BY THE STUDENT
ASSOCIATIONS IN THE OTHER SCHOOLS IN VIENTIANE IT CON-

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SISTED OF ABOUT 50 STUDENTS CARRYING PLACARDS IN FRONT OF THE THAI DELEGATION'S HOTEL. THE PLACARDS CARRIED SUCH SLOGANS AS: "WELCOME THAI IMPERIALISTS," "REDUCE TRANSIT COSTS" AND "THAI SHOULD NOT ALLOW THE USE OF THEIR TERRITORY FOR FOREIGNERS TO INVADE LAOS." THE MANIFESTATION TOOK PLACE ON THE MORNING OF THE MINISTER'S ARRIVAL, BUT THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT THE VISIT. THE STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES WERE PRIVATELY APPLAUDED BY MANY LAO WHO FELT THAT THEY MADE CLEAR THE DEPTH OF LAO FEELING TOWARDS THE THAI, BUT AT THE SAME TIME WERE CRITICIZED BY SOME VIENTIANE SIDE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET AS BEING CONTRARY TO LAO TRADITIONS OF HOSPITALITY.

8. COMMENT: THE VISIT WAS NOT INTENDED TO PRODUCE CONCRETE RESULTS; THESE ARE TO BE ACHIEVED BY FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE MEETINGS. WHILE IT WAS HIGHLY IMPORTANT FOR THE LAO AS AN INDICATION OF A CHANGED THAI ATTITUDE TOWARD LAOS, ITS ACTUAL IMPACT ON THAI-LAO RELATIONS WILL DEPEND
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ON WHAT THE THAI WILL IN FACT DELIVER. PROBABLY THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ITEM FROM THE LAO POINT OF VIEW WILL BE THE CHANGES THE THAIS ARE PREPARED TO MAKE IN THE HANDLING AND COSTS OF GOODSTRANSITING THAILAND TO LAOS. THIS MATTER HAS OVER THE YEARS BEEN THE SINGLE GREATEST IRRITANT TO THEIR RELATIONS.

9. THE FACT THAT PHOUMI MADE THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN FORCES IN THAILAND AN ISSUE IN THE CONVERSATIONS GIVES FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT THE PATHET LAO CONTINUE TO PURSUE THEIR POLICY GOALS WITH DOGGED DETERMINATION.
WHITEHOUSE

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